

REMARKS

The last Office Action has been carefully considered.

It is noted that the Examiner objected to the traversal on the grounds that Figures 4, 5, and 6 are of a single inventive idea, and confirmed the election of Figure 6 for further prosecution. The Examiner indicated that there is no description of Figure 6 in the specification. Also, the Examiner stated that claims 1, 3-5, 9 and 11 were indicated as readable on the elected species of Figure 6, and claim 1 in his opinion is not readable on the elected embodiment.

With the present Amendment applicant has amended the specification to provide a description of Figure 6, which was accidentally omitted in a translation from the German priority application. It is respectfully submitted that Figure 6 clearly shows the structural elements of the embodiment shown in this Figure, and the description of Figure 6 which is now introduced in the specification does not raise the issue of new matter. The Examiner is respectfully requested to accept the introduced description of Figure 6.

In connection with the Examiner's question with respect to claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that the statement that "supporting element at least partially surrounds said driven shaft" means that no further components are arranged between the driven shaft and the supporting element, as specified in the second full paragraph on page 5 of the specification. This does not mean however that there is no radial air gap between the shaft 28 and the supporting elements 38.

To the contrary, the direct support or "supported against" in the case of occurrence of an outer axial force identifies a direct contact, so that the driven shaft 28 in the case of high axial load axially expands so that it axially contacts the supporting element 38, as explained in detail in lines 4-6 on page 16 of the specification. The operational principle as a crash-protection therefore requires that "the driven shaft 28 is directly supported against the supporting element".

It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 1 is readable on the elected embodiment of Figure 6.

Consideration of the present application on the merits and its allowance is most respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner require or consider it advisable that the specification, claims and/or drawings be further amended or corrected in formal respects in order to place this case in condition for final allowance, then it is respectfully requested that such amendments or corrections be carried out by Examiner's Amendment, and the case be passed to issue. Alternatively, should the Examiner feel that a personal discussion might be helpful in advancing this case to allowance, he is invited to telephone the undersigned (at 631-549-4700).

Respectfully submitted,



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